Transportation and Public Works

Business Plan
2002-2003

March 27, 2002

Transportation and Public Works

Mission

Construct, maintain and manage provincial highways, buildings and related infrastructure, and provide accommodation, property and procurement services in support of sustainable economic growth and social well-being.

Transportation and Public Works is an infrastructure department that:

- provides services - direct or procured – to Nova Scotians and other government departments,
- is client-focused, and
- defined by its commitment to cost-effectiveness and quality.

Planning Context

Wherever you go in Nova Scotia, you'll see obvious signs that transportation and public infrastructure are vital to our economy. Whether it's a highway, bridge, railway track, airport or ferry terminal – each element contributes to the larger goals we share as a province. And our buildings house the operations of government, support education throughout Nova Scotia, and enhance our ongoing efforts to promote tourism and culture.

In a changing environment, particularly since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the Department of Transportation and Public Works continues to monitor regional, national and international issues that can affect the economic and social interests of Nova Scotians.

We have identified the top seven trends likely to affect our work in the coming year.

1. Availability of funding for highway construction and maintenance
2. Need for a national transportation strategy
3. Aging infrastructure
4. Meeting customers' needs with information technology
5. Availability of skilled human resources
6. Environmental concerns
7. Managing public expectations

Funding for Highway Construction and Maintenance

As we identified in a study called "*Nova Scotia's Primary and Secondary Highway Systems: 10-Year Needs*", this province suffers from a serious shortfall when it comes to funding for roads, highways and bridges. At a time when government should be spending $340 million a year on roads and highways, budgets in recent years have been typically in the $60-75 million range. System expansion needs amount to $100 million a year, while preservation and rehabilitation of the existing inventory of highways and

bridges requires $240 million per year. Under that ten-year plan, we should be repaving 1,000 kilometers of road each year, when in fact, we complete 200-250 kilometers per year.

We will continue to push the federal government to join us in providing a long-term highway funding agreement. As a department, we recognize that we are competing with other provincial departments for the same taxpayers' dollars – money that's also needed for new schools, doctors' salaries and social support programs. While we continue to seek maximum provincial funding to address this shortfall, we will also continue to demand that the federal government reinvest a larger share of its fuel tax revenues in our public highway system.

Within the financial resources that are available, the department will build and maintain roads in the most cost-effective manner while ensuring product quality. New methods of doing business will include Road Weather Information Systems, performance grade asphalt, and end product specifications.

Lack of National Transportation Strategy

Transportation planning, done properly, takes time. It also takes collaboration and partnerships with other government agencies and the private sector.

Across Canada, planning at the national level includes a process called the "Transportation Blueprint", which was announced by the federal government. It's an opportunity to influence future federal policy in our region. We will continue to represent Nova Scotia interests. In particular, we are stressing the need for fair and affordable access to air, rail and marine transportation routes. Forty per cent of our trade goes to export markets, so reliable access is critical.

Aging Infrastructure

Pavement doesn't last forever. The average age of pavement across Canada is 14 years. In Nova Scotia, the average is 21 years. Some roads are even older. As a consequence of deferred maintenance, the cost of repaving old roads has gone up considerably - from $120,000 to $180,000 per kilometer.

On the building side, Transportation and Public Works manages 1,430 government-owned buildings. Many of these facilities are more than 40 years old and need significant repairs. And as our population grows older, we'll be required to provide even greater accessibility for people who are disabled due to age or illness. Funding for the increasing volume of maintenance required will be a continuing challenge.

Meeting Customers' Needs With Information Technology

How can we use technology to better serve our clients? From electronic procurement to accommodation services to advance weather information systems to environmental management - our decision-makers are asked to make significant policy and operational judgments in a rapid global environment. As we continue to develop relationships with clients, suppliers and partners, it will be

essential that our communications, and supporting technologies, be as seamless and as efficient as possible. Our Procurement Division, for example, has made great strides in developing and delivering high-quality services that support government policies and programs.

Availability of Skilled Human Resources

The Department of Transportation and Public Works is not immune to a problem identified across government – an aging work force. Many of our senior staff are skilled in specialized technical and engineering disciplines and can't be easily replaced. Not only is it difficult to compete with the private sector for emerging new talent from our universities and technical schools, but in some instances, we're finding it difficult to retain our own employees.

Environmental Concerns

In recent years, more public attention has focused on issues around air and water quality. As the provincial department responsible for cleaning up contaminated sites, we expect to face continual budget pressures as new needs are identified.

For example, the issue of road salt was the subject of national and regional media attention last fall and winter. The federal government is leading a process to reduce the amount of road salt applied in winter maintenance programs. It has recommended that road salts be added to a list of substances considered toxic to the environment. Nova Scotia has taken several proactive measures to manage salt use, including the construction of more modern storage facilities. We are also participating on a national working group to address salt-related issues. As a further measure, our department also introduced Winter Maintenance Standards, which will ensure fair and consistent service levels in every corner of the province, while helping manage salt use.

Managing Public Expectations

Nova Scotians drive on our roads and highways and visit our buildings and other facilities seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. They have a right to expect that their tax dollars are used to ensure that our roads and buildings are safe and also contribute to effective public service. To provide that level of service, we will again work closely with other government agencies and stakeholders in the private sector as we pursue the goals and objectives set out in this year's business plan.

In summary, the transportation sector faces many varied challenges. The issues will require a strategic and thoughtful approach, to ensure this sector supports the economic and social policy goals of the Province of Nova Scotia.

Strategic Goals

The following goals are aligned with the corporate goals of this government.

1) Enhance the value and safety of the transportation system.

2) Manage provincial real property, effectively and efficiently, for government's best strategic advantage.

3) Provide the infrastructure and related policies necessary to support economic growth of the province.

4) Provide efficient, cost-effective and environmentally sound government services to address customers' needs.

Core Businesses

The Department is comprised of three core operational areas: Highway Operations, Public Works, and Government Services. Supporting sections include: Policy and Planning, Public Affairs and Communications, Human Resources, Financial Services and Information Technology.

The Department's core businesses can be summarized as follows:

1. Construction, maintenance, and operation of provincial roads, bridges, and ferries.
2. Planning of transportation infrastructure; and planning and management of roadway and building infrastructure, including provision of highway and bridge design services, project management services for government construction projects, environmental services, and administration of 10 industrial water utilities.
3. Provision of accommodation and property services to provincial government departments and agencies; administration of government procurement and supply processes, including computer hardware, software, and IT-related programming and consulting services; provision of postal services for government; and administration of industrial parks and malls.

Priorities for 2002-2003

Core Business #1
Construction, maintenance, and operation of provincial roads, bridges, and ferries.

- Continue to provide cost-effective maintenance services for provincial roads, bridges, and ferries and snow and ice control on provincial highways so that public satisfaction levels and condition ratings are maintained.

- Adjust the provincial salting program to address concerns raised by the federal government's review of the use of road salts and their effect on the environment. Actions will include: continued construction of new storage facilities to increase storage capacity by an additional 10%; expanding the use of Road Weather Information Systems and advance forecasting by at least 40% by December 2002; doubling the number of department units equipped to use prewet salt and sand / salt mixtures by December 2002; and implementing new winter service levels with consistent criteria on a province-wide basis by winter 2002/2003.

- Continue expanding the use of the private sector for highway maintenance operations, where it is cost effective and impacts on existing staff are minimal, while ensuring service levels are maintained.

- Improve the quality of the capital construction program by using End Product Specifications on all suitable paving contracts (contracts of 10,000 tons of asphalt or more) and expanding the program to include concrete and gravel. This program increases the contractor's responsibility for their product quality.

- Continue construction on Highway 101 from Mt Uniacke to Ellershouse, and commence construction on Highway 125, as part of the federal cost shared agreement signed in 2001.

- Upgrade the Seal Island Bridge on Highway 105 including strengthening and deck replacement design.

- Ensure cost effective and reliable ferry services, by initiating design and tenders to start the process of replacing the Joshua Slocum ferry.

Core Business #2

Planning of transportation infrastructure; and planning and management of roadway and building infrastructure, including provision of highway and bridge design services, project management services for government construction projects, environmental services, and administration of 10 industrial water utilities.

- Coordinate the pre-tender planning of the following projects: Highway 101 - St Croix to Avonport twinning; Highway 104 - New Glasgow to Sutherlands River twinning; Highway 103 - Otter Lake to Hammonds Plains Road twinning; Highway 103 - Barrington; Highway 107 - Burnside to Highway 102; and Highway 113.

- Continue development, management, and delivery of comprehensive highway safety programs (e.g., Crosswalk Safety Program) by fulfilling responsibilities identified in the Memorandum of Understanding with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations dealing with driver, vehicle and roadway elements.

- Implement a Road Listing Program (comprising policies and procedures, transportation geographic information system, network management system and information databases) for improved inventory and management of departmental road information. The up-to-date information, in graphic and database form, combined with the management systems, will enable improved business decisions to be made by both district and head office staff.

- Continue to plan and implement an Environmental Management System, which will provide tools to identify and resolve environmental issues when developing and implementing projects and programs, for both highway operations and provincially owned and leased buildings.

- Reduce energy requirements, by installing new and efficient architectural, mechanical, and electrical systems in all new and existing buildings, in support of a 'Green Building Policy'.

- Participate, with the other three Atlantic Provinces, in the development of a "Harmonized Trucking Strategy".

- Participate with all provincial and territorial governments to continue to pressure the federal government to take steps to address the financial viability of small airports and liberalization of federal air access policies to support the economic growth of the province, especially for the tourism and business industries.

- Undertake activities to enhance the safe operation of provincial railways. These activities will include: the establishment of agreements with the Canadian Transportation Agency and the Transportation Safety Board regarding government obligations under the Railways Act; the development of a railway audit and performance evaluation processes; and the provision of railway incident and

accident information to the national data base.

- Implement new commercial van safety regulations to ensure that all public passenger vehicles involved in inter-municipal transport, regardless of size, adhere to the highest provincial standard of safety.

Core Business #3

Provision of accommodation and property services to provincial government departments and agencies; administration of government procurement and supply processes, including computer hardware, software, and IT-related programming and consulting services; provision of postal services for government; and administration of industrial parks and malls.

- Continue supplier development programs and Nova Scotia Business Opportunities Initiatives to improve the flow of information of all public sector, federal, provincial, MASH (municipalities, agencies, schools and hospitals) buying opportunities to Nova Scotia companies. In addition, promote the expanded value and use of e-commerce in public procurement.

- Evaluate, award and negotiate the corporate telecommunication (telephone: long-distance, voice, paging, cellular; and data communications) Request for Proposal and develop service level agreements with vendor, client departments, and other organizations.

- Develop an Application Hosting Strategy to determine where software applications should reside (departmentally, corporately, or other).

- Continue joint federal/provincial procurement and property development initiatives, such as the Strategic Procurement Council. This council includes representatives from Public Works and Government Services Canada, Halifax Regional Municipality, Province of Nova Scotia, and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. It was formed to jointly participate in activities such as supplier briefings, comparing initiatives and common activities.

- Provide ongoing primary support to volunteer service providers, in their use of Trunk Mobile Radio and the legacy Nova Scotia Integrated Mobile Radio.

- Initiate a customer satisfaction survey to determine the satisfaction of government clients with accommodation services; and develop an audit process for government leased premises to ensure compliance with leases.

Budget Context - Operating Budget

Core Businesses	Budget Allocation (thousands) 2001-02 Forecast	2002-03 Estimate
Field Administration	17,261	18,991
Highways and Bridges	55,461	57,395
Snow and Ice Control	38,513	36,013
Fleet Management	502	550
Ferry Enterprises	4,370	4,700
Employee Benefits	10,479	10,075
Total Highway Operations	126,586	127,724
Engineering & Design	1,704	1,831
Building Services	6,395	6,802
Utilities	387	349
Public Works/Special Projects	13,444	13,858
Highway Engineering Services	1,989	2,473
Maintenance Improvements	50,510	58,083
Environmental Remediation	2,845	1,736
Total Public Works	77,274	85, 132
Real Property Services	5,082	4,242
IT Procurement & Quality Assurance	479	312
Procurement & Postal Services	1,449	1,288
Technology Services	12,484	13,630
Total Government Services	19,494	19,472
Total Industrial Properties*	2,132	
Policy and Planning	738	786
Senior Management	592	597
Corporate Services Units	5,268	5,700
Total Business Support	6,598	7,083
Total TPW	**232,084**	**239,411**
Salaries and Benefits (included in above figures)	**88,450**	**90,947**
Funded Staff (FTEs) **	**2005.5**	**2044.0**

* Funding has been transferred to the new Sydney Tar Pond Agency, which has been set up as a Public Service Vote for presentation in the Estimates books.

** The increase in Funded Staff (FTEs) in 2002/03 is primarily due to an increase in engineering, technical and capital construction staff requirements as a result of an additional $32 million in capital funding for roads and bridges.